

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claim 1, add new claim 23, and amend claims 3, 21 and 22 as indicated:

1. Cancelled

2. Cancelled.

3. (Currently Amended) The shelf stable pasta or rice meal of claim 21 †, wherein said sauce is one selected from the group consisting of cheese sauce, brown sauce, bordelaise sauce, mushroom brown sauce, white sauce, alfredo sauce, curry sauce, dill sauce, horseradish sauce, veloute sauce, hollandaise sauce, bearnaise sauce, mornay sauce, raisin sauce, cream gravy, gilet gravy and tomato sauce.

4-19. Cancelled.

20. (Previously Presented) A sauce for use with an acidified pasta or rice, said sauce being selected from the group consisting of brown sauce, bordelaise sauce, mushroom brown sauce, white sauce, curry sauce, dill sauce, horseradish sauce, veloute sauce, hollandaise sauce, raisin sauce, gilet gravy and tomato sauce;

the pH of said sauce being modified to raise its pH in an amount sufficient such that, when said pH modified sauced is mixed with said acidified pasta or rice, the acidic flavor notes present when said acidified pasta or rice and an unmodified sauce are mixed, are muted.

21. (Previously Presented) A shelf stable pasta or rice meal comprising in combination:

(a) a cooked pasta or rice which has been acidified to a pH in the range of about 3.7 to about 4.5;

(b) a pH modified sauce for use with said cooked pasta or rice, the sauce comprising an added edible alkaline or base substance, such that said sauce has a pH in a range of about 5.9 to about 7.2,

~~The shelf stable pasta or rice meal of claim 1, wherein the edible alkaline substance is selected from the group consisting of disodium phosphate, disodium phosphate duohydrate and sodium hydroxide.~~

22. (Previously Presented) A shelf stable pasta or rice meal comprising in combination:

(a) a cooked pasta or rice which has been acidified to a pH in the range of about 3.7 to about 4.5;

(b) a pH modified sauce for use with said cooked pasta or rice, the sauce comprising an added edible alkaline or base substance, such that said sauce has a pH in a range of about 5.9 to about 7.2,

~~The shelf stable pasta or rice meal of claim 1, wherein the sauce comprises 0.7-1.0% of the edible alkaline substance.~~

23. (New) The shelf stable pasta or rice meal of claim 22, wherein said sauce is one selected from the group consisting of cheese sauce, brown sauce, bordelaise sauce, mushroom brown sauce, white sauce, alfredo sauce, curry sauce, dill sauce, horseradish sauce, veloute sauce, hollandaise sauce, bearnaise sauce, mornay sauce, raisin sauce, cream gravy, giblet gravy and tomato sauce.